

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Officers' Reports
  - Chairperson's Report
    - i. October Expenditures
    - ii. 2016 Calendar of Events
    - iii. FY17 Budget
    - iv. Appointment of Committee Chairs
  - Vice Chairperson's Report
4. Standing Committee Reports
  - Economic Restructuring Committee
  - Organization Committee
  - Design Committee
  - Promotions Committee
  - Special Event Ad Hoc Committee
5. Downtown Manager Updates
  - Farmers Market Season
  - Holiday Preparation & Events
  - Updates
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Public Comments
9. Adjournment Next meeting – The next OTDB meeting will take place **December 3, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Exhibit Hall.**

## **OTDB Special Event Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations**

### **OTDB Vision:**

To be a vibrant and inclusive Main Street community that combines small-town charm and big-city opportunity and is nationally recognized as a desirable place to work, live, and thrive.

### **OTDB Mission:**

The OTDB inspires community involvement, fosters economic vitality, encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, and attracts residents, visitors, and investors to Old Town Winchester.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this OTDB Ad Hoc Committee is to make recommendations to help inform City staff in the creation of a RFP for a Special Events Organizer and Promoter. The intent of this recommendation is to refine and improve upon the existing events program. The goals of Old Town events are to bring people to Old Town, to create a sense of place, to enhance the brand, and to create partnerships with local groups and businesses.

### **Methodology**

The Committee, comprised of five OTDB members and five stakeholders, researched publicly funded events programs in ten different communities: Front Royal, VA; Staunton, VA, Harrisonburg, VA; Charlottesville, VA; Waterford, VA; Hampton, VA; Norfolk, VA; Lebanon, NH; St. Augustine, FL; Lititz, PA. Committee members reviewed these findings, along with contract templates, official documents, as well as accounts from verbal conversations. The Committee held five meetings, and one small-group work session, to create the Special Events Ad Hoc RFP Recommendations document. The resulting document presents both procedural recommendations to improve the quality and operation of events, and event recommendations listing specific goals and proposed scope of future events.

### **Summary of Findings**

The members of the Committee agree that events are an important part of the success and growth of Old Town. We believe the events programs should continue, and should be periodically adjusted for the greater benefit of Old Town. The initial RFP for Special Events Contractor focused primarily on the creation of events for Old Town Winchester. After a period of three years, the goal of a vibrant and active downtown has been realized. This achievement has been reached not only through city funded programs, but also through events generated by community and private organizations. As such, the new RFP and events contract should restructure the duties of the Contract to focus more on providing support and marketing for both public and privately organized/funded events. All events reflect upon the quality of the Old Town experience, and contribute to the vitality of Old Town. It is imperative that all City approved events support the mission and vision of the OTDB.

The majority of communities that we surveyed operate events with a non-profit business model, which often is not funded by a special tax assessment. None of these examples had an effective method for gauging the overall success of events or their impact on local businesses. As this outcome is difficult to measure, greater importance should be placed on the direct involvement of Old Town stakeholders. Events should enhance shopping, dining, and living downtown. Old Town events should appeal to multi-cultural residents, as well as the "Creative Class" which figures so prominently in our brand.

## **Procedural Recommendations**

- Written event proposals provided by Contractor for review by the OTDB at least two months prior to budget deadline. Proposals should include: name of event, date(s), purpose, target audience, concept overview, projected budget, staffing, location, marketing strategy, and operation outline.
- Contractor must take an active role in promoting and advising all City-approved events.
  - Communicate with other city event organizers
  - Provide complete city schedule of public and private events
  - Provide promotional support for all City-approved events
  - Skilled in writing engaging text for marketing materials and press releases
- Contractor to create an Old Town events manual in cooperation with OTDB and City Staff to uphold consistent quality and branding.
  - Formalize preferred procedures for events
  - Establish branding and messaging hierarchy for marketing materials
  - Identify acceptable locations of portable restrooms and vendors
  - Post-event evaluation template and timeline
    - Evaluation template for contractor performance and stakeholder satisfaction to be completed and submitted to Downtown Manager two weeks after the event
- Create year-round schedule of programs and events
- Inclusion of secondary district businesses in event planning and participation
- Partner with organizations to coordinate, promote and support events outside the city contracted events, provide exposure and advertising to events that already occur in OTW
- Provide fundraising and marketing support for events organized by City staff - e.g. Chocolate Escape, Family Movies, Classic Movies, Taylor Pavilion, Spooktacular
- Engage the business community through sponsorships
- Engage the non-profit community through partnerships

## **Events Recommendations**

- All events should support and promote the Brand of Old Town Winchester
- Create events that support the OTDB mission and branding focusing on:
  - Families
  - Young professionals
  - Creative class
  - Socioeconomic diversity
  - Cultural diversity
  - Health and active lifestyle population
- Focus reach on audiences in the quad-state area and beyond
- Produce Signature events that are spread throughout the year
  - Child friendly event - e.g. Kidzfest
  - Holiday themed event - e.g. Rockin Independence Eve
  - Large scale fall event - e.g. October Fest
  - Large scale holiday event - e.g. Holly Jolly
  - Music and entertainment events - e.g. Friday Night Live
- Create or facilitate new events that support Old Town brand and promote diversity
  - John Kirby festival featuring Jazz/Soul/Blues
  - Patsy Cline festival focusing on celebration event
  - Creative class events - e.g. Public art, folk, literary, projection mapping)

- Health/wellness events - e.g. fun run, health fair
- Create new retail-focused program in partnership with stakeholders

#### **Performance Evaluation Recommendation**

- Event proposals provide factors by which to assess event
- Evaluation of performance and review of event summary will be required Promotions Committee meetings
- Produce content around social/online outlets and increase audience by 15%
- Downtown Manager provides the following monthly
  - Parking numbers/revenue
  - Current Meals tax increase
  - Current Retails sales
  - Tourism metrics visitors, hotel occupancy, etc.
  - Ticket sales
  - Attendance figures
- PR metrics for story placement
- Attendance reaches event specific goals
- Increase attendance at Saturday and Sunday events

#### **Additional Considerations**

- Surplus funds generated by Old Town events should return to the OTDB budget to be utilized to market and promote Old Town.
- Contractor should be hired with sufficient time to prepare event proposals for November OTDB retreat.
- OTDB would like to review the new RFP before it is put out for bids and have the opportunity to give feedback.